
If you believe you are eligible to vote and encounter difficulty registering, please contact the Virginia State Board of Elections:

200 North 9th Street, Suite 101
Richmond, VA 23219-3485
(804) 786-6551 (voice)
(800) 552-9745 (toll-free)
(804) 371-0194 (fax)

www.sbe.state.va.us/votregserv/reg2vote.htm

If the Virginia Board of Elections is unable to help you, or to report a problem, contact:

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Voting Section, Rm. 7254 - NWB
Washington, D.C. 20530
(202) 307-2767 (voice)
(800) 253-3931 (toll-free)
(202) 307-3961 (fax)
www.usdoj.gov/crt

This pamphlet is provided for informational purposes only, as an aid to further inquiry. The laws in many states are revised frequently, and may have changed since this pamphlet was issued. It is your responsibility to determine whether you are lawfully eligible to vote, and criminal penalties can result from voting when ineligible or making false statements on a registration form.

Issued December, 2000

U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division



Restoring Your Right to Vote



The right to vote is an important civil right in a democracy as well as a civic responsibility, and yet many persons who have been convicted of a crime do not know whether they are eligible to vote. For both federal and state elections, the right to vote is controlled by the law of the state in which you live. Some states restrict the right to vote for persons who have been convicted of a crime. This pamphlet is intended to help you determine whether you are eligible to vote in the state in which you live, and if so, what steps you must take to be permitted to vote.

What law governs whether my felony conviction limits my right to vote?

The impact of a criminal conviction on the right to vote varies widely from state to state. Whether you can vote after being convicted of a crime is determined by the state in which you live, not the state in which you were convicted.

Can I vote while I'm incarcerated in Virginia?

If you are a resident of Virginia, you cannot vote in Virginia elections while you are incarcerated as a result of a felony conviction. If you are a resident of another state who is temporarily incarcerated in Virginia, you may be able to vote by absentee ballot in your home state. You need to consult the law of your home state regarding both criminal convictions and absentee ballots to see if this is a possibility.

I have been released from incarceration.

How do I restore my right to vote?

If you were convicted of a felony in Virginia, then you must obtain a "removal of political disabilities" from the Governor in order to regain your right to vote. You are eligible to apply for the removal of your political disabilities if you

completed your sentence more than 5 years ago and if all court costs and restitution have been satisfied. To apply, contact:

Governor of Virginia
State Capitol, 3rd Floor
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 786-2211 (voice)
(804) 371-6351 (fax)
www.thedigitaldominion.com

What if my conviction was for a federal crime or a crime in another state?

A felony conviction makes you ineligible to vote in Virginia, no matter where you were convicted, and you must have your rights restored before you will be permitted to vote. The Governor of Virginia cannot grant you a pardon on behalf of the federal government or that of another state, but he can remove your political disabilities in Virginia and therefore restore your Virginia voting rights.

If you wish to seek a full pardon for a conviction from another state, you should contact the Governor's office of that state for information on their procedures. If you were convicted of a federal crime, you may contact:

Office of Pardon Attorney
United States Department of Justice
500 First Street, N.W., 4th floor
Washington, D.C. 20530

What happens if I move to another state?

If you move to another state, your right to vote will be controlled by the laws of that state.

What are Virginia's other voter registration requirements?

To vote in Virginia, you must:

- be a U.S. citizen
- be a resident of Virginia
- be at least 18 years old on or before the date of the next general election
- not claim the right to vote anywhere else
- not currently be judged "mentally incompetent" by a court

When do I need to register to vote?

Registration is available year-round in Virginia. However, in order to participate in an election, your registration application generally must be received at least 29 days before that election.

Where do I go to register?

Registration is available at many places in Virginia, including:

- local voter registration offices
- Department of Motor Vehicles offices
- public assistance agencies when applying for services
- Armed Forces recruitment offices
- public libraries
- State Board of Elections office